

SUBJECT: A report and recommendation on the draft Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal Plan.

PURPOSE:

To gain approval for the Urban Renewal Plan in accordance with section 725-3 of the Cincinnati Municipal Code (CMC).

BACKGROUND:

Two years ago, the Avondale Community Council and the Uptown Consortium hired private consultants to prepare the Burnet Avenue Revitalization Strategy plan. The draft plan is complete and the Avondale Community Council is requesting that the plan be adopted as an urban renewal plan.

URBAN RENEWAL AREA:

The proposed urban renewal area is situated in the middle of the Avondale statistical neighborhood. The proposed study area is bounded approximately by Forest Avenue to the north; Harvey Avenue to the east; Erkenbrecher Avenue to the south; and Wilson to the west, as shown on the attached map.

The City Planning Commission approved the Urban Renewal Plan study boundary on November 4, 2005.

The Office of Architecture and Urban Design in the City's Department of Transportation and Engineering conducted an eligibility study (blight study) for the area in accordance with Chapter 725 CMC. The study concludes that the number, degree, and distribution of factors documented in the report warrant the designation of the area along Burnet Avenue bounded by Forest, Harvey, Erkenbrecher and Wilson Avenues as a "Blighted Area" pursuant to Chapter 725 of the CMC. A summary of this study is included in the draft plan document.

PLAN OVERVIEW:

The draft plan was developed out of a community based planning process where the Burnett Avenue Revitalization Team (BART) served as the steering committee and advisors for the planning process. Early in the process, the consultant team worked with BART to identify key stakeholders such as major institutions, neighborhood leaders, local developers, residents, homeowners, local businesses and others. Workshops and a community charette were held for residents, business owners and stakeholders during the planning process. A series of meetings between the consultant and BART were held over a period of two years. Overall the revitalization strategy addresses the desire for new retail, new infill housing, new office space, new public spaces, additional parking and the need to address safety concerns. Some of the preliminary recommendations are as follows:

1. To make Burnet Avenue a unique urban place with an active and safe street life, including a range of new retailing opportunities where people will choose to live and work,
2. Provide new housing choices for residents,
3. Target programs for home improvement and home ownership within the neighborhood,

4. Seek a new unique identity that will enable Burnet Avenue to become known for special retailing experiences unlike those of many of its nearby competitors,
5. Establish a low income tax credit and/or a new markets tax credit fund(s),
6. Redevelop the site between Hickory and Rockdale with mixed-income replacement housing,
7. Develop a feasibility study for re-use of the building at the SW corner of Rockdale and Burnet,
8. Develop a large mixed-use development, which includes housing, parking and retail along Burnet Avenue,
9. Undertake a marketing study for new housing.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

On January 4, 2006, City staff held a public informational meeting in Avondale and invited all the property owners within the Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal study boundary and the Avondale Community Council. Uptown Consortium made a presentation of the plan and then questions and comments were taken. There was no one in opposition to the plan in attendance.

COORDINATED CITY PLAN:

The Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal Plan conforms to the following goals and policies of the Coordinated City Plan, Volume 2: Strategies for Comprehensive Land Use, 1980:

1. Promote economic development and stabilize communities by planning for the retention, revitalization and in some cases the expansion of commercial land uses.
2. Promote the stability of communities by planning for new residential land use as well as for the retention and rehabilitation of existing residential land uses.

ADDENDUMS TO THE DRAFT PLAN DATED APRIL 2005:

Since the City of Cincinnati was not involved in the preparation of this draft plan, it is standard procedure to circulate the draft plan to various city departments for comments. The plan was circulated twice and two meetings have been held with city staff from the Department of Transportation and Engineering, Parks, and Waterworks. Attached to the plan are both the comments from those city departments that responded and two addendums to be reviewed and approved as part of this draft plan.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The implementation plan is divided into five phases listed below:

- Phase 1 includes the area along Burnet bounded by Erkenbrecher, Harvey, Northern and Burnet.
- Phase 2 includes the area along Burnet bounded by Northern, Harvey, Rockdale and Burnet.
- Phase 3 includes the area along Burnet bounded by Rockdale, Harvey, Forest and Burnet.
- Phase 4 includes the area along the east side of Wilson between Northern and Rockdale.
- Phase 5 includes the remaining residential areas along Hearne, Northern, Erkenbrecher, Rockdale and Forest.

These five phases will be implemented over several years.

RECOMMENDATION:

The staff of the Department of Community Development and Planning recommends that City Planning Commission take the following action:

Adopt the draft Burnet Avenue Urban Renewal Plan, dated April 2005 with the attached Addendum 1 and Addendum 2.

APPROVED:

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments